

SPRING CLEANING

A HOUSEWIFE'S SUGGESTIONS

From a Correspondent

Spring cleaning can bring a spirit of adventure to the home, new ideas in design and decoration, and fresh touches of beauty in ordinary things. Or spring cleaning can make martyrs of all and leave the house much as it was beforehand. The wise housewife will tour her home beforehand, accompanied by the person most interested in each room, husband, maids, and children. This takes time but brings results.

The top will be taken first, the outside, in fact, where all tiles or slates should be fixed and firm. Gutters may need clearing and locks, frames, and panes of skylights must be in order. Some high houses have trapdoors and ladders leading to them. Are the rungs of these in good repair and does the trapdoor open easily and shut securely? Chimney sweeping is an essential part of spring cleaning and the sweep must also look to outside cowls and consider the possibility of loose bricks in the chimneys. Experience of smoking fires in winter will guide him over this.

IN THE NURSERY

Nurseries come next. Dawning colour sense may find expression in this spring inspection. Nursery floors and nursery lighting are of major importance. Cork lino is best cleansed by washing in warm water to which a tablespoonful of borax has been dissolved in each gallon. It then needs carefully rinsing, drying, and wax polishing.

Nurse should be able to work and read in comfort at the end of her day. All nursery lamps should be easily shaded in case of illness. This is indeed a good moment to overhaul the entire lighting system of the house. The main scheme in each room should be soft and restful with easily adjusted bright standard or table lamps to be used as required. A wise maxim is to bring the light to the work, not the work to the light.

BEDS AND BEDDING

If there have been uneasy sleepers in the house, bedrooms ought to be considered with special care. Draughts, rattling windows, too much or too little light, ill-fitting curtains or sagging mattresses may have contributed to the cause. Bedroom curtains must be washed or cleaned and a change from green to blue blinds or vice versa can often help bad sleepers.

Bedding may have to be remade but blankets can be washed at home. They need soaking for a quarter of an hour in warm soft soap lather with no soda. Rinsing water must be changed several times, the last rinse being in blue water. Blankets should be dried out of doors, and frequently taken down and shaken to raise the nap.

Stairs are important. Loose treads, rods, and banisters can cause serious accidents. Wooden banisters are often breeding places for dry rot. Dry rot is infectious, and particles carried on duster or shoes may spread it to other woodwork. Staircarpets respond to spraying with a solution of water and ammonia, one teaspoonful to a quart. During this inspection those who go up and down most should be asked whether a stool or table on the half landing would ease their burdens. Or it may be that pieces of furniture already there as ornaments are also obstacles.

BATHROOM NEEDS

Everybody should confer over the bathroom. We all have our ideal bathroom, but few of us have attained it. A small rubber mat on the bottom of the bath will make bathing safer for tiny children, and a rubber cup device which "sucks" on and holds soap will help hurried grown-ups. Tap washers will probably need renewing, and, if the cork on stool or chair or weighing-machine is wearing thin, it can be replaced by a new bit, bought in the piece. Is the shaving mirror at the right height and light? Are the towel rails easy to reach? Has the water system any idiosyncrasies, taps that will not turn on when others are running, uneven heating, and so on? In any case, boilers and tanks need inspection and probably scaling.

VANQUISHING MOTHS

All cupboards should be emptied, but especially those of the man of the house. Suits and woollens must be shaken, brushed, and if possible, sun-dried. Wall cupboards often need repapering or repainting. Where there has been any trace of moth, cupboards and shelves should be sprayed with weak paraffin.

Every chair, particularly those in smoking-room or library, should have its

springs tested and renewed if need be.

Where new colour schemes would be liked but cannot be afforded, fresh and lovely effects can be obtained with different cushion covers, differently placed. The putting away of surplus ornaments, the rearranging of small tables and wall mirrors give the feeling of space and novelty.

Mouse-holes must be looked for all over the house and filled up with putty in which a little peppermint oil has been rubbed. Mice hate that smell.

Newly designed labour-saving kitchens almost keep themselves clean without human aid. But all cooking stoves must be overhauled according to their several kinds. Large old-fashioned kitchens need more attention but give scope for ideas. In such a one, very big and long, the range was at one end, the working table against the wall at the other. The cook fixed a mirror above this so that she could see what was happening to her cooking pots without turning round!

BEER MUGS AND GLASSES

SOME MODERN DESIGNS

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

The traditional English style of serving beer is in a pewter pot. A tankard of silver is the prerogative of the rich, and a silver mug, although it lasts for ever, is still an expensive item. Nor is antique pewter to be spoken of as cheap. A whole set of these treasures is not easily come by.

Knowledgeable beer-drinkers favour silver or pewter because the metal chills the beer, and beer must always be served cold. Cultivated palates prefer bitter beer drawn straight from the wood, but casks, and even kegs, of beer are awkward things to store in flats and modern cellarless houses. Bottled beer can be chilled in a refrigerator, but not a barrel, which too often is placed carelessly in a hot kitchen. Tepid beer is detestable and to slip into each glass a chunk of ice is a heinous offence, for that as it melts waters the beer, for which there is no forgiveness. Hence more and more hostesses regard with envious eyes the tankards displayed in the shops of silversmiths.

ALTERNATIVE CHOICES

China, however, is an excellent substitute, for it, too, has cooling properties, and those with small purses must be grateful to Mr. Keith Murray for the mugs he has designed for Wedgwoods. They are delightful to look at and a set of six, either in off-white or a charming green shade, can be bought for less than the cost of one silver tankard.

Some beer-drinkers insist—the belief, though strongly held, is vigorously scouted by others as a superstition—that beer is ruined by drinking it from a glass, since glass, they hold, however thoroughly it may be dried, is given to "sweating." At any rate Germans favour a ware mug equipped with a lid. German beer-mugs are usually amusingly decorated and are an asset to a party.

Apart from Britons and Germans the beer-drinkers of other nationalities see no harm in drinking out of glasses. These lager glasses are tall, of a charming shape, and Danish ones have the lip decorated with a gold band. From Tirol come glasses of all sizes shaped like boots. These are a menace to the unwary, for, unless the toe of the "boot" is held pointing towards the drinker's chest, the beer is spurted over him who drinks it.

SERVING LAGER

Continental lager is much "lighter" than English beer. Munich lager is dark in colour; Pilsner a light gold. But whether dark or light, lager must always be served intensely cold, indeed at a temperature very little above that of the freezing point of water. It is fortunate, therefore, that lager is bottled for export. It can be put into the refrigerator.

Czechoslovakia is a great glass-producing, as well as a beer-brewing, country, and it turns out an endless choice of handsome jugs and glasses that are an enchantment to examine. The Swedes, a beauty-loving people, have been lately attending to the requirements of beer-drinkers and some fine pieces, must reasonably priced, are now to be bought in this country. A

Spring Cleaning.

From a Correspondent.

The Times (London, England), Wednesday, Apr 06, 1938; pg. 19; Issue 47962. (907 words)

Category: Arts and Entertainment

© Times Newspapers Limited

Gale Document Number:CS318976646